

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about——

Q. Mr. President, if you put the UN on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you place it?

The President. Rising rapidly. [Laughter]

Canada-Cuba Trade Agreement

Q. What do you think about Canada's trade deal with Cuba?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Canada's trade deal with Cuba?

The President. What about it?

Q. What is your reaction to it? Do you have any?

The President. Well, my reaction is I'm gratified that the Canadians, along with the Europeans, are now talking more to the Cubans about human rights and democratic reforms. I'm skeptical, frankly, that it will—that the recent discussions between the Canadians and the Cubans will lead to advances. I believe that our policy is the proper one, but I'm glad that the Canadians are trying to make something good happen in Cuba.

U.S. Debt to the United Nations

Q. Gentlemen, would the two of you like to have a common strategy about how to get a reluctant Congress to give up this money?

The President. Well, I think we have common interests there. I've already told you that I'm utterly convinced that the Secretary-General has a chance to genuinely reform the United Nations for the 21st century because he is committed to do it and because he and his team have the capacity to do it. And I think all that remains is for him to establish an appropriate relationship with our Congress. And I think he'll do it and do quite well with it. And we don't need to coordinate a strategy for that. No secret here, we've told you everything we've just said in there.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Memorandum on Increasing Seatbelt Use

January 23, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of Transportation

Subject: Increasing Seatbelt Use Nationwide

We have made steady progress in improving highway safety over the years. However, there are still far too many tragic and unnecessary deaths and injuries on the Nation's roads. As a first line of defense, we must all wear seatbelts. Seatbelts protect passengers not only in frontal crashes, but also in side, rear, and rollover crashes, saving about 10,000 lives a year. I understand that about 70 percent of the population use seatbelts. Increasing seatbelt use will clearly save more lives and reduce injuries.

I hereby direct you, working with the Congress, the States, and other concerned Americans, including the automobile and insurance industries, and safety and consumer groups, to report back to me in 45 days with a plan to increase the use of seatbelts nationwide. The plan shall address, among other things, the State laws that require the use of seatbelts, assistance from the Department of Transportation to improve those State laws, and a comprehensive education campaign on behalf of the public and private sector to help the public understand the need to wear seatbelts.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at the Swearing-In of William Cohen as Secretary of Defense and an Exchange With Reporters

January 24, 1997

The President. Good morning. Mr. Vice President, Secretary-about-to-be Cohen, Janet, Secretary Perry, Deputy Secretary White, General Shalikashvili, General Ralston, Senator Inouye, Senator Levin, Senator

McCain, Senator Stevens, Senator Thurmond, Senator Collins, Senator Snowe. I'm delighted today to be here along with all of you for Senator Cohen's swearing-in.

I want to congratulate him on the swift confirmation of his nomination. It says a great deal about this extraordinary man that his Senate colleagues paid him the tribute of a unanimous vote of approval. In so doing, the Senate sent a strong signal of its intention to work in a constructive and bipartisan spirit to preserve and enhance our national security.

Bill Cohen is the embodiment of that spirit. Throughout his years as a Senator and a Congressman, he's reached across the divisions of party to strengthen our defenses, shaping the START I arms control treaty, helping reorganize the Department of Defense, guiding the most important deliberations about our Armed Forces. He has never forgotten, as he said so eloquently in his testimony on Wednesday, that at the end of every debate stand our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, who look to us for leadership, not political strife.

As we move forward to face the challenges of the next century, America's leadership in the world will depend upon that understanding, just as it did in World War II and the cold war. We know that to seize all the possibilities of this moment and to keep the United States the greatest force for peace and freedom, for security and prosperity, we must continue to have the best-trained, best-equipped, best-prepared troops on Earth, because at the heart of America's power is our military strength and will.

Whether they are deterring a dangerous tyrant in the Persian Gulf, helping the people of Bosnia build peace in their shattered land, defending democracy in the cold war's last frontier on the Korean Peninsula, or standing watch for liberty here at home, our Armed Forces maintain America's status as the indispensable nation.

In Bill Cohen, our military will have a Secretary of Defense with the vision, judgment, and dedication that our era demands. He has served the people of Maine with tremendous distinction. And now I'm pleased that all Americans will benefit from his leadership and his wisdom.

On their behalf, I now ask the Vice President to swear William Cohen into his new office.

[At this point, Vice President Gore administered the oath of office, and Secretary Cohen made brief remarks.]

Pentagon Priorities

Q. What will be your top priority at the Pentagon? Are you going to hit the deck running? *[Laughter]*

Secretary Cohen. I intend to hit it running. My first—I have a full day starting immediately after this ceremony. I'm going to be paying a final visit with Secretary Perry. I'm going to be meeting with General Shalikashvili and Deputy Secretary White to discuss matters this afternoon. I'm sending messages to all of our troops today, along with the commanders of the regional commands. I'll be meeting later this afternoon with all of the service chiefs and secretaries, and then beginning some budget deliberations and briefings, starting at 5:30 this afternoon with John Hamre.

So I have a fairly full schedule today. And we'll look forward to starting this process of trying to retain and attract the best qualified people in our military, to make sure that we provide them with the best equipment, training, and that we seek to modernize our forces for the future.

So all of that is very high on my agenda.

Q. Are you going to ask for more money? *[Laughter]*

Secretary Cohen. I'm going to do my best to see to it that we have the best military that the world has ever seen.

The President. Everybody else does. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Cohen. I see Senator Stevens over to my right, and I'm sure that I'll be calling upon him for assistance as we go through the budgetary process.

Q. What is the budget for defense—a secret?

The President. We're releasing it in a few days.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Announcing the President's Summit On Citizen Service

January 24, 1997

The President. I thank the Vice President and the First Lady for their remarks. Obviously, I am delighted to have President Bush, General Powell, and Secretary Cisneros back. Henry's only been off the payroll a day or two. [Laughter] I didn't really know if he'd come. [Laughter]

I thank so many people here who have advocated national service and citizen service of various kinds for a long time. Especially I'd like to acknowledge, in addition to Harris Wofford and Bob Goodwin, Eli Segal and Ray Chambers; Al From with the Democratic Leadership Council; Charles Moskos, the national scholar of citizen service, who was for all this years before the rest of us knew it was an issue. Thank you, sir, for all your lifetime of work devoted to the proposition that the American people can forge their own destiny and solve their own problems. We thank you.

This is an extraordinary collection of Americans who have gathered here, not only on the stage but out here in the room, to advance the cause of citizen service. Much of the work of America cannot be done by government. Much other work cannot be done by government alone. The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others. The challenges we face today, especially those that face our children, require something of all of us, parents, religious and community groups, business, labor organizations, schools, teachers, our great national civic and service organizations, every citizen.

One of my proudest moments as President was signing the bill creating the Corporation for National Service and AmeriCorps. During the last 3 years, about 50,000 Americans have earned aid for college by serving in their communities, doing real work to address critical problems, cleaning up rivers, working with the police to make the streets safe, helping children learn to read, and doing many, many more things in every State in the country.

These AmeriCorps members and even larger numbers of Senior Service Corps and

student volunteers have really helped to revive the spirit of service in America. I noticed just a few days before the Inauguration the publication of a national poll—I can mention that now and you think I have not self-interest, you see—[laughter]—the publication of a national poll that said that young people are serving in their communities in far higher percentages than just a few years ago.

I think this is a culmination of years and years of effort. When President Bush held this office, he understood that so much of what is good in America has to be done and is being done by people who are outside Washington and outside the Federal Government. And we share his hope that by holding up examples of ordinary Americans engaged in extraordinary service, by holding up those 1,000 Points of Light, they will grow by the power of their example into millions of points of light. And we thank you for that.

Citizen service belongs to no party, no ideology. It is an American idea which every American should embrace. Today I am pleased to announce that we are taking an important step to give more Americans the opportunity to fulfill that promise. On April 27th, in Philadelphia, with the support and leadership of the Corporation for National Service, the Points of Light Foundation, General Colin Powell and Secretary Henry Cisneros, President Bush and I will convene the first President's Summit on Citizen Service. Our goal is to mobilize America's citizen power in a united effort to solve our common problems, especially those that threaten our young people.

Leaders from a broad spectrum will come with commitments in hand, concrete pledges of support and volunteers to solve their local problems. In preparation for the summit some of our most prominent corporations and service organizations have already stepped forward. Big Brothers-Big Sisters has pledged to double their mentoring relations, matching 200,000 deserving young people with caring adults through the 2000. And they have pledged to compound their efforts by having these adult volunteers actually do other citizen service projects with the young people they mentor. They not only will be serving the young but calling on the young to serve. Lens Crafters will provide one mil-